

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01240 291858Z

73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 L-03 AID-20 OMB-01 IGA-02

MMS-03 RSR-01 /094 W

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R 282104Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6124

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

JCS

SECDEF

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

S E C R E T BRIDGETOWN 1240

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI BB

SUBJ: TRANSFER OF USSOUTHCOM FROM CANAL ZONE

REF: STATE 164406

EMBASSY COMMENTS ON REFTEL PARAS 2B AND 2A FOLLOWING THAT
ORDER:

(B) GOVERNMENTS OF BARBADOS AND ASSOCIATED STATES SEEM
TO KNOW LITTLE AND CARE LITTLE ABOUT U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE
IN CANAL ZONE, SINCE THESE ISLANDS, WITHOUT ANY MILITARY OF
THEIR OWN, HAVE NO TIES WHATSOEVER WITH SOUTHCOM (WHICH
DEFERS TO CINCLANT IN THIS AREA ANYWAY). PANAMA CANAL TREATY
ISSUE IS NOT RPT NOT OF DIRECT CONCERN TO GOB. IN KEEPING
WITH ITS NORMAL POSTURE OF AVOIDING HAVING TO TAKE CONTRO-
VERSIAL POSITIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE, GOB WAS NOT EVEN REPRESENTED AT SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING IN PANAMA LAST MARCH. CONTINUED PRESENCE OF U.S. MILITARY AS IRRITANT IN CANAL ZONE, THOUGH, MIGHT EVENTUALLY PUT GOB IN POSITION OF HAVING

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TO CHOOSE SIDES WITH LATIN NATIONALISTS ON TREATY ISSUE AT
OUR EXPENSE.

(A) LOCATION OF SOUTHCOM IN CANAL ZONE HAS NO EFFECT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS HERE, BUT POTENTIALLY ADVERSE EFFECT ON TREATY ISSUE SUGGESTED ABOVE COULD DEVELOP OVER TIME. IF SOUTHCOM WERE TRANSFERRED TO U.S. OR PUERTO RICO, LOCAL REACTION WOULD PROBABLY FAVOR THIS SHIFT AS SIGN OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW FROM ADVANCED, EXPOSED POSITION ON "FOREIGN SOIL," THOUGH MOVE TO PUERTO RICO COULD HAVE SLIGHT EFFECT, AS KINGSTON PUTS IT, IN STIRRING VESTIGIAL FEARS OF U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CARIBBEAN, AND COULD BE INTERPRETED AS U.S. PREPARATION TO MOVE AGAINST ANY RADICAL BLACK POWER ELEMENTS WHICH ASSERTED THEMSELVES IN EASTERN CARIBBEAN ISLANDS. ANY ADVERSE IMPACT OF MOVING SOUTHCOM TO PUERTO RICO MIGHT BE COUNTERACTED BY PUTTING MOVE IN CONTEXT OF CONSOLIDATION WITH U.S. MILITARY COMMAND ALREADY THERE AND BY STRESSING THAT ITS PRINCIPAL MISSION WOULD BE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES SUCH AS ADMINISTERING MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, GENERAL LIAISON, AND SEARCH AND RESCUE, LAST OF WHICH EASTERN CARIBBEAN ISLANDS VALUE HIGHLY.

LORD

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NNN

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